Remarks:

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-20 remain in the application. Claims 1, 14-16 and 19 have been amended. Claims 3, 6 and 11-13 have been withdrawn from consideration at this time.

In the section entitled "Specification" on page 2 of the above-identified Office action, the specification has been objected to because of informalities.

Appropriate correction has been made. More specifically, the reference sign for a "lateral sheet edge" has been changed to "31'". The corresponding Fig. 5 has also been amended.

In the section entitled "Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112" on pages 2-3 of the above-identified Office action, claim 19 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention; claims 1, 14, 15 and 16 have been rejected as being indefinite under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

More specifically, the Examiner has stated that claim 19 states in line 2 that the sheets are gripped and then in line 5 states that the alignment is contactless.

The term "gripping" in claim 19 refers to the holding of the sheet by a sheet-retaining device whereas the term "contactless" means that no mechanical stops are provided for aligning the sheet but rather contactless-operating sensors.

The Examiner has also stated that claims 14, 15 and 16 are indefinite due to the use of "and/or"; claim 1 is indefinite because the word "it" in line 7 is unclear as what "it" refers to; and there is insufficient antecedent basis for the limitation "said sheet-detection device" in line 2 of claim 16.

The language of these claims has been amended to even more clearly define the invention of the instant application. Claim 16 has been amended to depend on claim 11 to provide sufficient antecedent basis for the limitation "said sheet-detection device."

It is accordingly believed that the claims meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, first and second paragraphs. Should the Examiner find any further objectionable items, counsel would appreciate a telephone call during which the

matter may be resolved. The above-noted changes to the claims are provided solely for cosmetic and/or clarificatory reasons. The changes are neither provided for overcoming the prior art nor do they narrow the scope of the claims for any reason related to the statutory requirements for a patent.

In the section entitled "Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102" on pages 3-5 of the above-mentioned Office action, claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 19-20 have been rejected as being anticipated by Holbert et al. (US Pat. No. 5,984,301) under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

The rejection has been noted and claims 1 and 19 have been amended in an effort to even more clearly define the invention of the instant application.

Before discussing the prior art in detail, it is believed that a brief review of the invention as claimed, would be helpful.

Claim 1 calls for, inter alia:

> at least one sheet-gripping device for displaceably aligning the sheet, said sheet-gripping device having a single positioning table and an actuating drive displacing said positioning table in at least one of a sheet travel direction, a direction transverse to said sheet travel direction, and a direction pivoting about an axis extending in a direction orthogonal to said sheet travel direction, the sheet to be aligned being fixable on said positioning table. (Emphasis added.)

Claim 19 calls for, inter alia:

> displacing the sheet into a desired position on a single positioning table; and
>
> aligning at least one of a leading sheet edge in a direction transverse to a sheet travel direction and of lateral sheet edges in a direction parallel to the sheet travel direction by contactlessly displacing the positioning table in at least one of a sheet travel direction, a direction transverse to the sheet travel direction, and a direction pivoting about an axis extending in a direction orthogonal to the sheet travel direction. (Emphasis added.)

Holbert et al. disclose a device for laterally aligning sheets with a carriage, which is displaceable transversely to the sheet transport direction. By this measure, a sheet can be aligned laterally. In order to be able to tilt a sheet, two carriages 20, 22 are provided one behind the other, which are movable counter-rotatingly.

According to the invention of the instant application, the movement in these directions can be enabled with solely a single "positioning table". Furthermore, with the positioning table, the sheet can also be aligned in or counter to the sheet travel direction.

Clearly, Holbert et al. do not show "at least one sheet-gripping device for displaceably aligning the sheet, said sheet-gripping device having a single positioning table and an actuating drive displacing said positioning table in at least one of a sheet travel direction, a direction transverse to

said sheet travel direction, and a direction pivoting about an axis extending in a direction orthogonal to said sheet travel direction, the sheet to be aligned being fixable on said positioning table", as recited in claim 1, and "displacing the sheet into a desired position on a single positioning table; and aligning at least one of a leading sheet edge in a direction transverse to a sheet travel direction and of lateral sheet edges in a direction parallel to the sheet travel direction by contactlessly displacing the positioning table in at least one of a sheet travel direction, a direction transverse to said sheet travel direction, and a direction pivoting about an axis extending in a direction orthogonal to said sheet travel direction", as recited in claim 19 of the instant application.

Claim 1 is, therefore, believed to be patentable over Holbert et al. and since claims 2, 4-5 and 20 are dependent on claims 1 or 19, they are believed to be patentable as well.

In the section entitled "Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103" on pages 5-7 of the above-mentioned Office action, claim 15 has been rejected as being unpatentable over Holbert et al. under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a); claims 7-10, 14 and 16-18 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Holbert et al. in view of Gerlier (US Pat. No. 5,140,166) under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

As discussed above, claim 1 is believed to be patentable over the art. Since claims 7-10 and 14-18 are ultimately dependent on claim 1, they are believed to be patentable as well.

In addition, Gerlier shows a device for positioning a pressure roller 11 to a drive roller 2 for transporting a sheet. In order to position the pressure roller 11, an electromagnet 35 is suggested. However, a sheet alignment does not occur via this electromagnet 35.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1, 2, 4-5, 7-10 and 14-20 are solicited.

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel would appreciate a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out.

If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made. Please charge any fees which might be due with respect to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the

Deposit Account of Lerner and Greenberg, P.A., No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,

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Marked-Up Version of the Amended Paragraphs in the Specification and Marked-Up Version of the Amended Claims:

The paragraph starting on page 22, line 18 and ending on page 23, line 9 now reads as:

Fig. 5 illustrates a regulator 61 to which the position sensor 59 for determining the position of the lateral sheet edge [63] 31' of the sheet 31 which is to be aligned within the feeder 1 is connected via a signal line 63. Furthermore, the rotary angle of the machine is introduced into the regulator 61 via a signal line 65, and the desired or nominal position of the lateral sheet edge [63] 31', namely the X-nominal or desired position, is introduced into the regulator 61 via a signal line 67. In order to control the pressure in the chamber 25 in the positioning table 15, the regulator 61 is connected to a negative-pressure valve 71 via a signal line 69. Furthermore, via a signal line 71, the regulator 61 issues actuating signals (voltage u) to an amplifier 75, via which, in turn, the currents I in the coils of the magnet bearings 43 and 45 are controlled. The intensity of the currents I emitted via the amplifier 75 influence the magnet-bearing forces applied to the positioning table 15, and thus the deflection of the positioning table 15 in the x-direction.

The paragraph starting on page 32, line 17 and ending on page 33, line 2 now reads as:

The exemplary embodiment illustrated in Fig. 11 differs from the exemplary embodiment illustrated in Fig. 10, in particular, in that no stops are provided for braking and stopping the incoming sheet prior to the alignment thereof by the positioning table [i5] 15. The sheet is braked into the standstill position, in this case, by subjecting the openings 23 to negative pressure, with the result that the sheet is retained forcelockingly on the contact surface 21 of the positioning table 15. The alignment of the sheet takes place in the same way as in the case of the exemplary embodiment described with reference to Fig. 10.

Claim 1(amended). A device for aligning [sheets] a sheet prior to transferring the [sheets] sheet to a sheet-processing machine, comprising:

at least one sheet-gripping device [by the aid of which] for displaceably aligning the sheet [to be aligned is displaceable], said sheet-gripping device having [at least one] a single positioning table [displaceable by] and an actuating drive displacing said positioning table in at least one of a sheet travel direction, [transversely] a direction transverse to said sheet travel direction, and [in] a direction [wherein it is pivoted] pivoting about an axis extending in a direction orthogonal to said sheet travel

direction, the sheet to be aligned being fixable on said positioning table.

Claim 14(amended). The sheet-aligning device according to claim 7, including a control [and/or regulating] device for activating said at least one electromagnet.

Claim 15(amended). The sheet-aligning device according to claim 2, including a control [and/or regulating] device for adjusting the negative pressure to which said at least one opening formed in said contact surface of said positioning table is subjected.

Claim 16(amended). The sheet-aligning device according to claim [9] 11, wherein said sheet-detection device is coupled with a control [and/or regulating] device to form a regulating circuit.

Claim 19(amended). A method of aligning sheets prior to transferring the sheets to a sheet-processing machine, which comprises:

gripping by at least one sheet retainer a respective sheet to be aligned[,];

displacing the sheet into a desired position[,] on a single positioning table; and

[contactlessly] aligning at least one of a leading sheet edge in a direction transverse to a sheet travel direction and [of] lateral sheet edges in a direction parallel to the sheet travel direction by contactlessly displacing the positioning table in at least one of a sheet travel direction, a direction transverse to the sheet travel direction, and a direction pivoting about an axis extending in a direction orthogonal to the sheet travel direction.